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AN ULTRA-ARTISTIC HOME.

A QUAINLY but gorgeously appointed dwelling indeed must be that of William Burges, the architect, from the account we read of it in *The (London) Queen*. The house, with its queer thirteenth-century tower, stands in the suburban precincts of Melbury Road. The first impression on entering, we are told, is one of brightness, joyousness, strength. The door entry and hall are quiet in tone; but as one proceeds more and more color and light gleam out, until the climax in gold and vermilion breaks upon the visitor. The whole scheme is mediæval, the work is mainly modern. The door entry is red brick, like the house. Entering by a bronze door, one passes into the hall, which is painted in lines like blocks—a pattern common in old churches, with a great window of very fine glass representing the four quarters of the day. Four vast bells, wherefrom issue the spirits of the bells, toss and ring in the sky. Morning, noon, twilight, and gloomy night succeed each other; the stars and planets, ruled by the great law of progression, are depicted with mediæval naïveté, as caught in the hands of the spirits of time. The coloring of the window is very brilliant, but the walls are quiet and cool in color. Over each of the various doors which open thence a directing sign is stencilled. One door leading to the garden has a flower, the main door a great key, the dining-room door the sign of good cheer, the library door the sign of learning, the drawing-room that of love—to which the room is fancifully dedicated, all the inner decoration relating thereto. Columns of marble support the upper story; one sees a small table or two; a bracket, whereon is written Dante's motto, "*Vita Nova*," in large letters, supports a yellow vase; but there is a noticeable absence of useless ornaments, pots, plates, and such like accessories; only one or two really needed for flowers appear. A convex mirror of unusual size hangs breast-high on one side. On the mosaic floor strive Theseus and the Minotaur in hard battle.

The dining-room is walled with Devonshire marbles, the mantelpiece built high into the wall. On either side cabinets or sideboards inclose precious drinking vessels. Cups of jade, goblets of silver and rock-crystal set with gems and quaint work, cameos, pearls, turquoise; antique mother-o'-pearl flagons with a long pedigree and full of beauty, crowd the little shelves. The library, dedicated to the arts and sciences, is a blaze of gold and color. Everything which is not precious "*per se*" is made so by skill and thought. The mantelpiece has become celebrated; like everything else, it is designed by the owner, carved in stone. The shelf contains, in among the foliage, the letters of the alphabet. Below is the precious letter H, which has dropped out of the set. The wretched deserter is found stuck to the Mexican onyx plaque far below, his glorious body taken from him, and only his original skeleton, and that crooked, is left.

The alphabet is differently treated in another place—the bookcases, whose golden panels shadow forth the trades, each according to the precedence of the letter—F, for the founder, who is founding bells; B, for the bricklayer; G, the glazier, who joys in his work, holding it up to the light; A, the architect, Aladdin's self! Another bookcase has some charming panels, which are all painted by men of note, now Academicians; the daintiest little borders, friezes, wreaths, appear, made of butterflies, flowers, shells, and fishes, some conventionalized, some "*au naturel*." Among the grave the comic peeps. Here we see insects fighting viciously, there the spider spinning, with a distaff—mediæval feeling again—or we have plaques of marble and onyx let in to drawers and doors. Such is the use which Aladdin makes of the painter's art; such was the mediæval use. The ceiling of the drawing-room is most elaborate, like those of Italian palaces. This room gives on the most charming lawn full of huge trees, a relic of Old Kensington, the flower-beds planned according to those ancient pleasaunces depicted in mediæval romances; beds of scarlet tulips bordered with stone fencing, and in the middle a mosaic pavement with seats and a fountain.

Up a narrow winding stair of stone, lighted with colored windows and protected by soft curtains, one reaches the bedrooms. The guest-chamber is made of fire and flowers. That is to say, the bed, toilet-table, washstand, and cabinets are all plain gold. The shutters are plain gold. The windows glow with the colors of the Alhambra. Through Moorish trellis-work these

colors shine, the subjects being only visible by scrutiny. What is not pure gold is crystal; the knobs on the bedposts, the shelves of the tables scintillate with facets. The whole room is like an ancient shrine or reliquary.

The walls are painted with a deep frieze of flowers, growing "*au naturel*," which relieves the mass of gold by myriad tints. On one of the cupboards Socrates is seen teaching an eager boy; above, Xantippe, leaning out of window, is just cooling their enthusiasm for science with her ewer. Martin Luther is there too, with the troublesome devil, who tickles him with a peacock's feather. Aristotle is there, ridden by a most seductive maid, who beckons to Alexander above. Below, rabbits and foxes sport, and flowers grow everywhere. Here is a gilded book-shelf. The color of the washstand is also of gold, with fragments of bright stones and shells inlaid; those called "*Venus's ears*" have been largely used. Every blank space is carved minutely in flowers, beautifully tinted, with here and there a lizard or two and some butterflies among them. Thick crystals inclose small shelves, where a scent bottle, some hundreds of years old, and a tooth-powder receptacle, some thousands, nestle and shine. Marble plates receive the soap. A fine bronze, which ordinarily would be placed upon some table for ornament, here makes itself useful. It is a bull, from whose throat the water pours into a Brescia basin, inlaid with silver fishes. Another bronze, a tortoise, which seems to creep beyond the bull's reach, is a plug; you twist him round and the bull fills the basin. On one washstand is the following quaint inscription from Chaucer, "*This is the mirrour perillus on which the proud Narcissus sey all his faire face bright*." In unexpected places little taps and handles shine forth, made of coral or silver, with uncut stones enfixed therein.

Mr. Burges's own sleeping-room is almost wholly scarlet. Around the walls runs a cornice of conventional waves full of life-size fishes, which in some places are almost deceptive in glitter. A siren combs her yellow hair over the fireplace. The cupboards and dressing-tables are crowded with precious flasks of gold and cloisonné, and the scarlet bed with its tall head-piece is painted by Henry Holiday with the Sleeping Beauty.

Such is the description of this sumptuous house as given by the writer in *The Queen*. It will strike the general reader, we think, that Mr. Burges's taste for the gorgeous is quite out of the common, and happily so. As an eccentricity we should say that the house is amusing enough, but for living in, and as a model of decoration, we should say that it displays altogether too much talent.

CURTAINS AND HANGINGS.

WITH a fair supply of cash, taste, and some prudence in choosing from among the various materials, it is very easy nowadays, says a London journal, to furnish our rooms with curtains and hangings suitable to all means, styles, and seasons. For sun and dust exposed city houses, where the heavy rich-colored winter hangings would materially suffer in the present season if not removed, or at least protected by other materials, white cream or coffee-colored muslins and lace curtains will be found invaluable. Where the former are removed, these lined with bright-colored batiste muslin or sarsenet look well. Lace curtains, which otherwise would not look fresh, will, thus lined, serve two seasons. A finely-plaited frill of the lining, allowed to come beyond the edge of the curtain all round, looks well. Another mode of refreshing discolored white curtains is, after careful washing, to tint them the fashionable yellow-brown with tea or coffee. The new black lace curtains should, to look to advantage, be lined. Any color or shade of color in harmony with the rest of the room decorations can be used. Old-gold and robin's egg-blue sateen are favorite colors for this purpose. Blinds to match should be worked with sprays of bright-colored flowers with bands for looping, to match, as well as a bench or settee cover if the window allows. Black net or clear wire grenadine curtains can also be worked and scalloped round with colored wool or silk, or a border band worked or woven set round them. Black net or lace curtains striped diagonally with pale blue satin and silver ribbon, with broad looping bands of pale blue satin, embroidered with tiny scarlet poppies, the plain drapery across the top similarly embroidered, suit a boudoir. The same design

can be carried out with black satin ribbon embroidered with green and gold-colored corn-ears, top drapery to match, a thick cordon of artificial poppies looping back the curtains. White or yellow-tinted lace curtains, lined with white or yellow sateen, and interlined with a deep rich violet to show the lace, the violet valance edged with a thick heliotrope chenille or wool fringe, plaited bands of heliotrope and violet looping the curtains, blinds to match with heliotrope embroidery, look particularly dainty and pleasant. Brown holland, grass cloth, and canvas-woven raw silk make pretty and seasonable curtains. Coarse linen, lace and fringe to match, can be used for trimmings. Curtains of the canvas silk, edged with deep bands of mahogany-colored brocade or satin, underneath which a deep fall of tinted lace appears, panel valance of brocade or satin to match, if satin embroidered with raw-colored silk, and portières to match, look elegant and uncommon. Artistic-colored sheetings, in deep rich-toned colors are admirably adapted for all kinds of hangings and are very inexpensive. They can be worked, bordered, and ornamented in various ways. A novel idea is a border of colored, shaded or contrasting satin squares set on diagonally or diamond-wise, in single or several rows. A lace-like straw bordering looks well on deep blue or dark red, thick straw cords and tassels to match, as well as panel top bordered with straw lace, and monogram carried out in straw cord, or ornamented with straw rosettes and tassels. The Venetian barque awning linens, in strips of holland, blue or red, make pretty bright curtains and blinds for country morning rooms. The bright-colored shawl-pattern Turkish cottons with a plain black sateen border, finished with a red and yellow cord or brown holland, bordered deeply with Turkish cotton, do well for a gentleman's morning room.

A set of smoking-room curtains was recently made in cigar-brown satin sheeting, embroidered with the pale-green leaves and the flower of the tobacco plant. They were bound with amber-colored galoon, mounted with dark rustic wood poles, and looped back with strings of large imitation amber beads. The dark carved wood and rustic chairs of various shapes, as well as the bolster divan and a window bench or settee, had backs, hoods, and covers to match, embroidered with devices of smoking apparatus. Here and there, on the top of a high-backed chair, or the arm of a causeuse, pretty brown leather pouches, embroidered in silks, were fastened for the smokers' stores. Little tables, ingeniously constructed of handsome Moorish brass trays, mounted on rustic stands, supported pipe racks and smokers' cabinets. The ash trays were lava, as well as the principal ornaments. On the chimney-piece, which was high and wide, with a treble-tier rustic wood shelf, movable brackets for lights at each side completed the smokers' paradise. The walls were hung with pale-brown gold and cardinal stamped leather paper, and panelled with dark oak. High narrow mirrors, set in oak frames, with amber beading next the glass, reaching from the floor to the ceiling, had a good effect. This latter was dome-shaped, tinted pale green.

White Indian and Swiss embroidered muslin curtains always look fresh and dainty if well combined. The beautiful colored Indian muslins, which equal hand-painting, look exquisitely bright in sombre rooms. A self-colored net-like material, called Hamburg net at one time, combines well in alternate breadths with embroidered grass cloth, Turkey-red cottons or dark-green sheeting. Chinese and Indian Pongee and other washing silks combine beautifully with dark rich curtain materials, either outside the dark to save them from light and sun, or with one of each kind in each window.

For lining clear white curtains shades of deep or pale coral are best, as they make a rosy and not pink light; Chinese yellow and pale coral, olive-green and stone, ash-green and wood-brown, faded leaf and royal blue, the deep and light shades of peacock blue with gold, are all good combinations.

A RECENT French invention for decorating glass objects so as to produce metallized effects consists in substituting a reducing gas or vapor, such as hydrogen or common coal gas, for the air by which it is now blown into moulds or shaped by hand. By this artifice the salts of the metallic oxides which have been added to the glass in the course of its manufacture, are reduced, and metallized effects more or less varied are produced, according to the composition of the glass.